

THE PUBLIC HEALTH.

Dr. GUY, in a lecture on the Unhealthiness of Towns, recently published by the "Health of Towns' Association," gives the following summary:—

"1. That the districts inhabited by the poorer classes are badly drained and badly cleansed.

2. That in the houses of the poor there is a great want of all the conveniences which contribute to cleanliness and decency,—an ample supply of water, efficient house-drains, and places for the reception and discharge of refuse matter.

3. That the rooms inhabited by the poor are over-crowded and ill-ventilated.

4. That the shops and workshops of the poor are also very imperfectly ventilated, and in other respects extremely unwholesome; and that these evils are often greatly increased by long hours of work.

5. That in the districts inhabited by the poorer classes there is a great want of open spaces for exercise and recreation.

6. That the evils attendant upon scanty supplies of water in the houses of the poor are exaggerated by the want of cheap baths and washing places.

7. That the several evils enumerated in the six foregoing propositions, and the excessive liability to sickness, high rate of mortality, and curtailment of human life, specified in the first four propositions, stand towards each other in the relation of cause and effect.

The economic results of the circumstances just detailed are the following:—

1. Great pecuniary embarrassments among the poor themselves, arising from loss of work or of situation, and the expenses attendant upon unnecessary sickness and premature death. To which may be added, the increased contributions to benefit societies, rendered necessary by excessive sickness.

2. A heavy annual expense entailed upon the community in the shape of large contributions to hospitals and dispensaries, and the general charities of large towns, and of increased assessments to the poor rates.

3. A loss sustained by the Government, in consequence of the diminished physical power and greater liability to disease of recruits raised from among the inhabitants of large towns. To which must be added the expenses necessarily attendant upon the crimes springing out of the unfavourable physical circumstances, and consequent moral degradation of the poor.

The moral and religious effects of the circumstances already detailed are:—

1. The sacrifice of self-respect, and the formation of bad habits, among which the vice of intoxication holds a prominent place.

2. An absence from schools and other places of instruction, from places of innocent recreation and amusement, and from places of worship, from a want of the means of cleanliness and of decent clothing.

3. A large amount of crime, directly produced by over-crowding, and the admixture of persons of both sexes, and of all ages, in small and confined rooms.

The remedies for this fearful combination of evils, physical, economic, and moral, are partly in the power of the sufferers themselves, partly in that of landlords and employers, partly in the power of associations, and partly in the power of Government alone.

The remedies which the labouring class have at their own command are these:—

1. The disease of intoxicating liquors, and the careful avoidance of the temptation to drink them under whatever shape it may offer itself.

2. The disease on the part of mothers and nurses of Godfrey's cordial; children's quietness, and every preparation of that class, whatever be its name.

3. Scrupulous cleanliness as far as the means of cleanliness are provided; personal cleanliness by the occasional use of warm baths; daily washing of the entire surface of the body with cold water; washing of the hands after work, and of the face, hands, and feet before retiring to rest; a frequent change of body and bed-linen; and household cleanliness.

4. The prompt removal, as far as it is practicable, of all slops, and every kind of refuse matter.

5. The practice of ventilation at all seasons of the year, by opening the doors and windows the first thing in the morning, and thoroughly airing the bed-clothes for a short time before

retiring to rest; the introduction into the window of a perforated zinc plate, or other cheap and effectual means of admitting fresh air, without occasioning too much draft; and leaving the chimney open.

6. The choice, where it is practicable, of a large and lofty room, preferring the higher stories of the house; and where it can be done without inconvenience, choosing a residence in the suburbs. When there are many in a family, making any sacrifice to secure two or more rooms.

7. When there is a choice of employments, to avoid sedentary occupations, and those offering the greatest temptation to drink; where there is a choice of masters, preferring the one whose rooms are largest and best ventilated, and whose hours of work are most moderate; in those cases where work may be done either at home or at the workshop, to do it at home.

The remedies which are in the power of landlords and employers are these:—

1. The landlord will best consult his own pecuniary interest, at the same time that he will discharge a bounden and most grateful duty, by keeping his houses in good repair, supplying them with water and all proper conveniences, and securing, as far as it is in his power, efficient cleansing and sewerage. He should also whitewash the rooms at least once a year; and should take care that, after the visit of any contagious disorder, they be thoroughly cleansed, fumigated, and ventilated. His pecuniary reward will be higher rents, and those rents better paid; and he will reap the joint recompense of justice and mercy.

2. The employer may do the same good on a great scale; and reap the same rewards, by giving his workmen room to breathe, keeping his chimneys open, selling his stoves, hot water and hot air apparatuses, and returning to the good old English open fire-place, with its true economy; conducting the foul air of gas-lights, if he use them, into tubes fitted for its discharge, and resorting to some efficient means of ventilation. In large establishments the open fire-place will entail too great an expense; heating by hot water is therefore to be preferred; but a free ventilation—a free entrance and free exit of air—is absolutely necessary. By paying his men on Friday, or on Saturday morning, and on his own premises; by adopting moderate hours of work; by encouraging, or, if he please, insisting on, the appropriation of a small part of his men's wages to insure them against casualties; he will be discharging high duties, and will see and enjoy their benefits.

The things that are in the power of associations may be stated thus:—

1. To promote inquiries into the actual physical condition of the working-classes, and the influence which the circumstances that surround them have upon their health and well-being; to instruct the public by lectures and cheap publications, and to urge on the legislature, by public meetings, petitions, and all constitutional means, the necessity of interference.

2. A very important kind of association for carrying out these great objects, is an association of the labouring classes themselves. Such an association has been recently set on foot, and from my heart I wish it all possible success."

The "Working Classes' Association" referred to has been formed in the metropolis for improving the public health, and seems likely to effect much good. In the "First Address from the Committee," just now issued, in reply to the question, "Why is there so much disease among us?" The answer is, "Because, in numbers of things, we do just what by our nature we were never meant to do. For example:—

1st. Man is intended to draw in fresh air every time he breathes. Almost all people, when in their houses, and the working people in their shops, breathe the same air over and over again.* To shew the necessity of allowing fresh air continually to enter living rooms, and the bad air to escape, it may be stated that every person during each minute of his life destroys a quantity of air twice as large as himself.

2nd. Man ought to breathe pure air at every breath. Our sewers and drains are so bad, that the vapours and foul gases rise, and we breathe them.

* It is a melancholy fact, that by far the greatest number of houses and rooms prepared for the labouring classes to live and work in, are most harmful to the health, and quite unfit for human beings to inhabit.

3rd. Man was intended to take exercise in the open air every day. Neither his heart, his stomach and bowels, his liver, his skin, his lungs, his kidneys, nor his brain will act rightly without walking exercise every day. Most of us do not get any walk, or only a very short one, which is scarcely of any use.

4th. Man is formed to take simple, plain, wholesome food. He eats all sorts of things, which not only do him no good, but do him harm, and he drinks large quantities of beer, spirits, and wine which hurt his stomach, and take away the proper use of his brain.

5th. Man ought to wash himself all over with water every day, so as to cleanse the pores of the skin, else they get stopped up, he cannot perspire rightly, and his skin cannot breathe. The majority of the people only wash their hands and faces every day.

6th. Man should wear clean clothes next to his skin, because the body gives off bad fluids. At present many people wear the same things day after day for weeks together.

7th. Man was intended to live in the light. Many, very many, have scarcely any light in their rooms.

8th. Man in this climate must wear warm clothing. Many have no flannel, and are clad with heavy and useless things."

Under the head "How are the Diseases to be put a stop to?" They say:—

"After thinking over what has been said about the causes of ill-health, it must be considered how the working-people can put an end to them, and it will be seen that the people themselves can do a great deal.

What can the work-people do?

1st. They can ventilate their rooms—the plans for ventilating them will be shewn in the Address on Ventilation from the committee.

2nd. They can claim assistance from the rich, so as to have good drainage in their houses, and to have proper sewers and those things necessary for the health and decencies of life.

3rd. They and their families can walk more; and they can ask the Government and the rich people to provide them open spaces of ground for healthful exercises."

4th. Working men can select wholesome food and avoid bad drink; and they can petition Government to provide officers to prevent food and drink, which are adulterated, from being sold.

5th. Working people can be more cleanly; they can bathe and sponge themselves in their houses, and they can petition for a better supply of water. They will also make use of the baths and wash-houses preparing for them, instead of having the washing done at home, which causes every thing they have to moulder and decay.

6th. The working classes can seek, and endeavour to obtain, more light in their homes, and they can improve upon the plans of clothing."

COMPETITIONS.

CAMDEN TOWN CHURCH.

Sir,—Perceiving advertisements from time to time in the columns of your admirable Journal, calling upon architects to submit designs in competition for various public buildings, I think it my duty to direct your attention to some circumstances connected with the late competition for a church to be erected at Camden Town. I think the case will justify my intrusion; and perhaps a notice of it may be the means of preventing, in some degree, a recurrence of the causes for complaint, and, at the same time, inform my brother competitors of the jeopardy in which their designs remain.

A limited number of architects submitted designs, by invitation, to the committee for building the new church early in April last, which designs were subsequently exhibited in the board-room of the commissioners in St. Pancras. Having waited with some patience until the latter end of September, I made a request to two members of the committee for the return of my drawings; but as they failed to comply with it, I wrote to the secretary, ex-

* A petition is now prepared for signature praying Government to secure Battersea Fields as a place for healthful exercises. It may be reached by the work-people by steamers from the densest parts of London for a penny or two pence; if it is allowed to be built upon, one of the few remaining sources of health to the work-people will be closed for ever.